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REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given to the present application. By this Amendment, claims 2, 3, 6-9, 11-17 and 24 have been canceled, claims 1, 4 and 26 have been amended, and new claims 27-39 have been added. Thus, claims 1, 4, 5, 10, 18-23 and 25-39 are now pending. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the remarks below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 4 has been amended to recite the first filter element as being cleanable. In light of this amendment to claim 4, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the § 112 rejection.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 4 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Van Winkle, U.S. Pat. No. 5,942,017. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As amended herein, independent claim 1 recites a filter system comprising, among other things, a HEPA filter element. Van Winkle fails to disclose a HEPA filter element. Accordingly, Van Winkle fails to anticipate amended claim 1 as well as claims 4 and 5 which depend therefrom. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the § 102 rejection of claims 1, 4 and 5.

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REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Van Winkle Sr., U.S. Pat. No. 5,942,017, in view of Tanaka et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,770,109. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 10 depends from independent claim 1. As amended, claim 1 recites a filter system comprising a first HEPA filter element and a second water vapor filter element mounted downstream of the first HEPA filter element such that air passing through the first filter element thereafter passes through the second filter element, the first filter element protecting and extending the useful life of the second filter element. Whether considered alone or in combination, Van Winkle and Tanaka fail to teach this recited subject matter.

As noted above, Van Winkle fails to disclose a HEPA filter, and also fails to disclose a water vapor filter. For these reasons, the Patent Office relies on Tanaka for its purported disclosure of a HEPA filter and a PTFE filter. However, Tanaka merely discloses that a HEPA filter can be formed using PTFE. See Tanaka at column 7, lines 48-58. In contrast, amended claim 1 recites two separate filters, namely, a HEPA filter and a water vapor filter, which Van Winkle and Tanaka both fail to disclose or suggest. For this reason alone, the §103 rejection of claim 10 should be withdrawn.

Moreover, the Office action contends it would have been obvious to modify Van Winkle's air conditioner and purifier so as to include Tanaka's HEPA filter because "PTFE filter is known to be effective in removing impurities such as boron and metals and unaffected by acids, alkalis or organic solvents." See Office action at pages 3-4. This statement is not supported by Tanaka. More specifically, Tanaka does not state that a

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PTFE filter is known to be effective in removing impurities such as boron and metals. Instead, Tanaka merely states that PTFE is "free from impurities such as boron and metals and unaffected by acids, alkalis, or organic solvents." However, this is clearly not a reason or motivation for using Tanaka's filter in the Van Winkle system. Accordingly, the Patent Office has failed to identify any motivation for combining Van Winkle and Tanaka in the manner suggested, and has therefore failed to establish a prima facie case of obviousness with respect to claim 10.

Additionally, Applicant notes that Van Winkle teaches use of an evaporator (rather than a water vapor filter) for removing water vapor from air. See Van Winkle at column 5, lines 54-58. Accordingly, it would not be obvious to modify the Van Winkle system to also include a water vapor filter (such as a PTFE filter) because Van Winkle teaches that the evaporator is sufficient for removing condensate from the air.

Dependent claims 18-23, 25 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Van Winkle Sr., U.S. Pat. No. 5,942,017, in view of Chung et al U.S. Pat. No. 6,660,070. However, these claims all depend from independent claim 1. As noted above, amended claim 1 recites a HEPA filter element and a water vapor filter element, neither of which are disclosed nor suggested by Van Winkle. Moreover, Chung fails to disclose or suggest a HEPA filter element or a water vapor filter element. For these reasons, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the § 103 rejection of claims 18-23, 25 and 26.

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NEW CLAIMS 27-39

By this Amendment, new claims 27-39 have been added. Independent claim 27 recites an electronic equipment enclosure comprising a HEPA filter for filtering particulate matter from air and a water vapor filter positioned downstream of the HEPA filter such that air passing through the HEPA filter subsequently passes through the water vapor filter for removing water vapor from the air. As noted above, the cited references fail to teach or suggest this recited subject matter. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to allow new claim 27 and claims 28-39 which depend therefrom.

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CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (314) 726-7500.

Respectfully submitted,

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